

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This preliminary amendment is essentially identical to the amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.312, filed 1/30/04. It is being filed with this RCE to ensure that the subject matter is entered in the issued patent as discussed with Examiner Nguyen on 3/09/04.

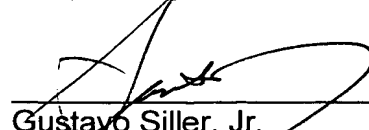
Claims 2, 6, 8, 13, 14, 19-24, 27-31, 34, 36-37, 40 and 42 have been amended. These claims correspond to claims renumbered in the Notice of Allowability, mailed 12/11/03, as claims 3, 6, 8, 12, 13, 1, 2, 7, 15-17, 19-23, 26, 28-29, 32 and 34, respectively. The claim amendments were added to clear up potential antecedent basis issues and to provide for better consistency when referencing particular claim elements, such as "casting belt" or "endless casting belt."

The changes in the specification and in the attached formal drawings reflect corrections and/or clarifications designed to clear up obvious inconsistencies between the drawings and/or the teachings in the specification and to conform the informal drawings in accordance with the requirements and conventions for formal drawings.

No new matter has been added as a result of this amendment. The changes are shown with strikethrough for deleted matter and underlining for added matter.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims remain in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gustavo Siller, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

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Figure 1

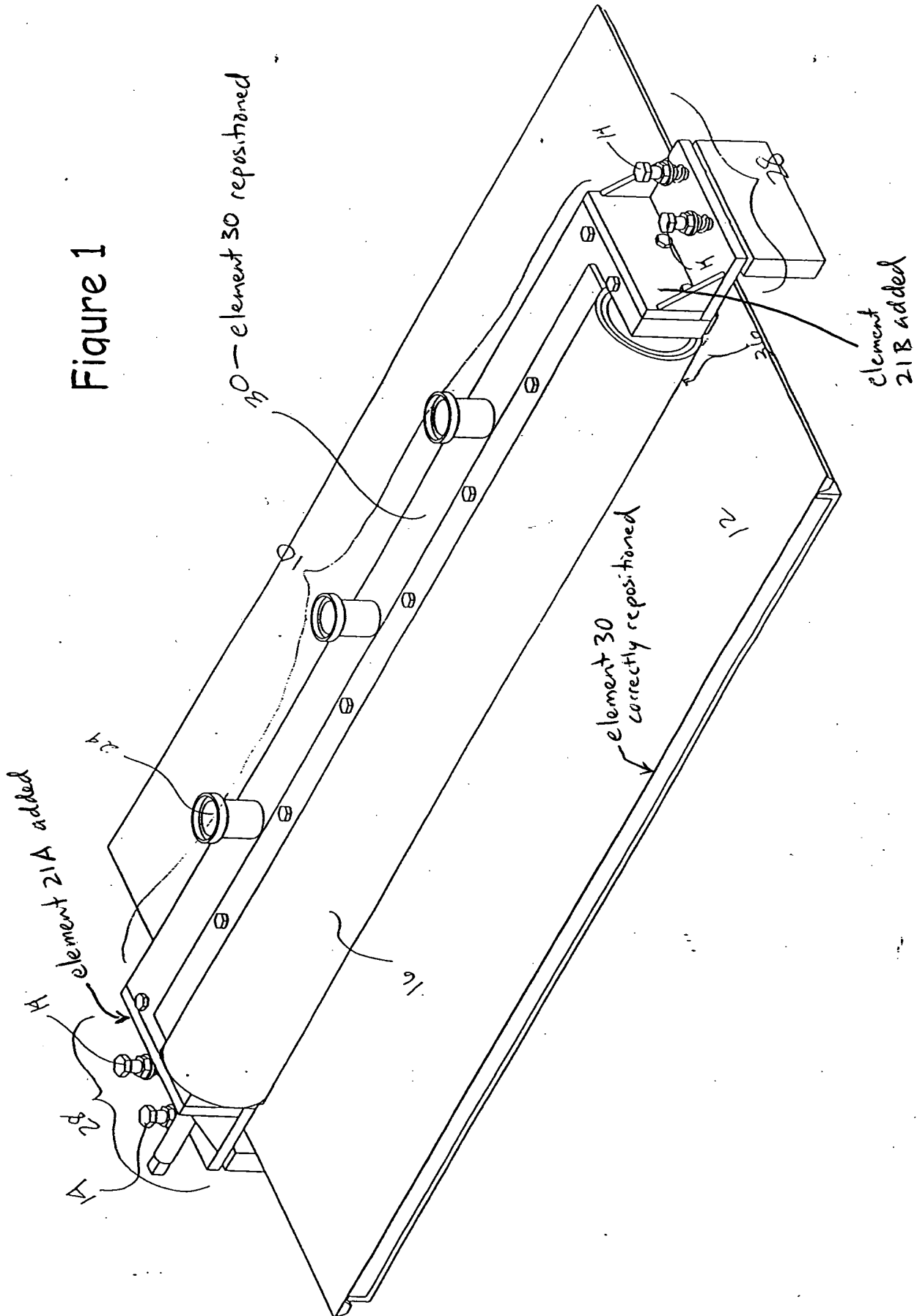




Figure 3

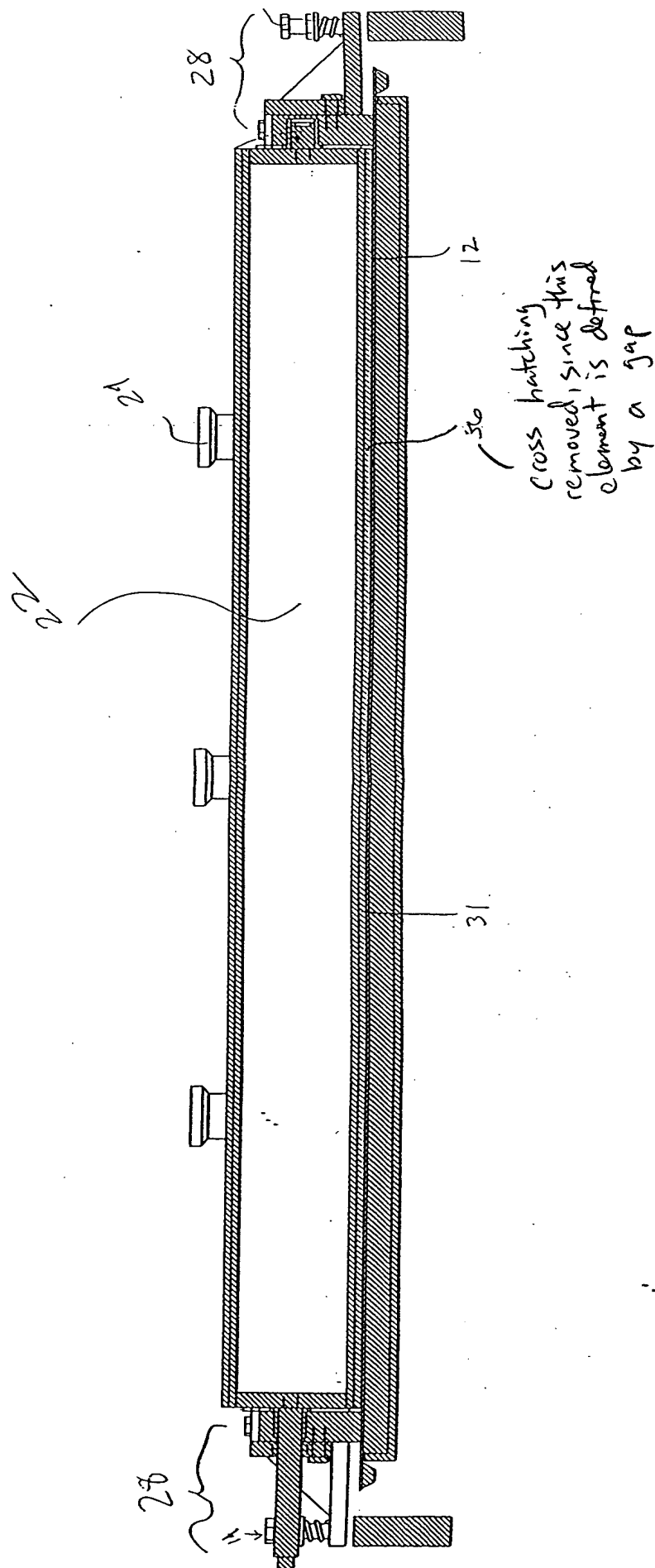




Figure 4

*no material
changes*

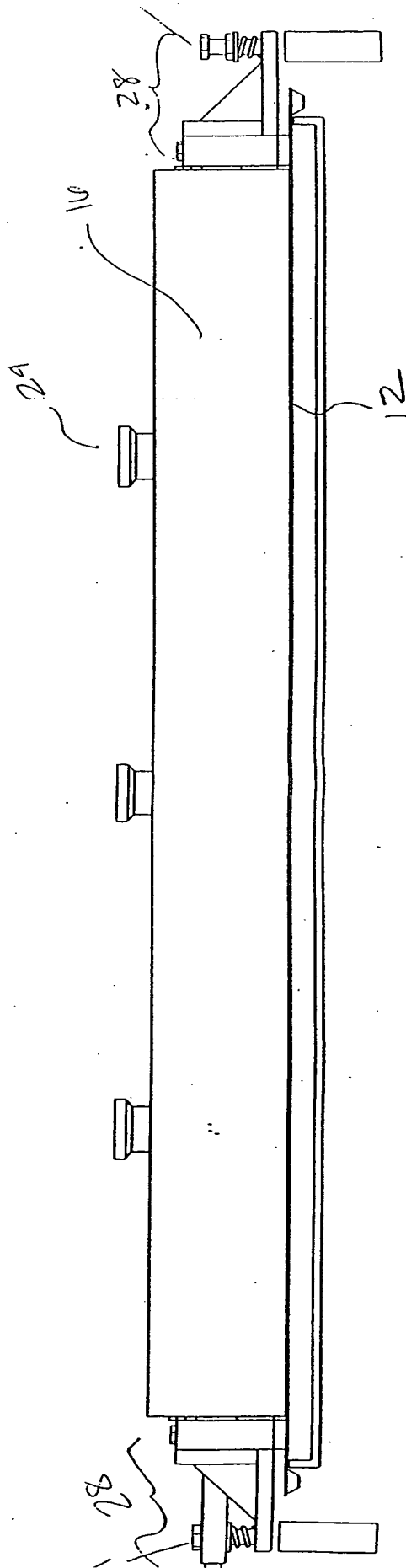
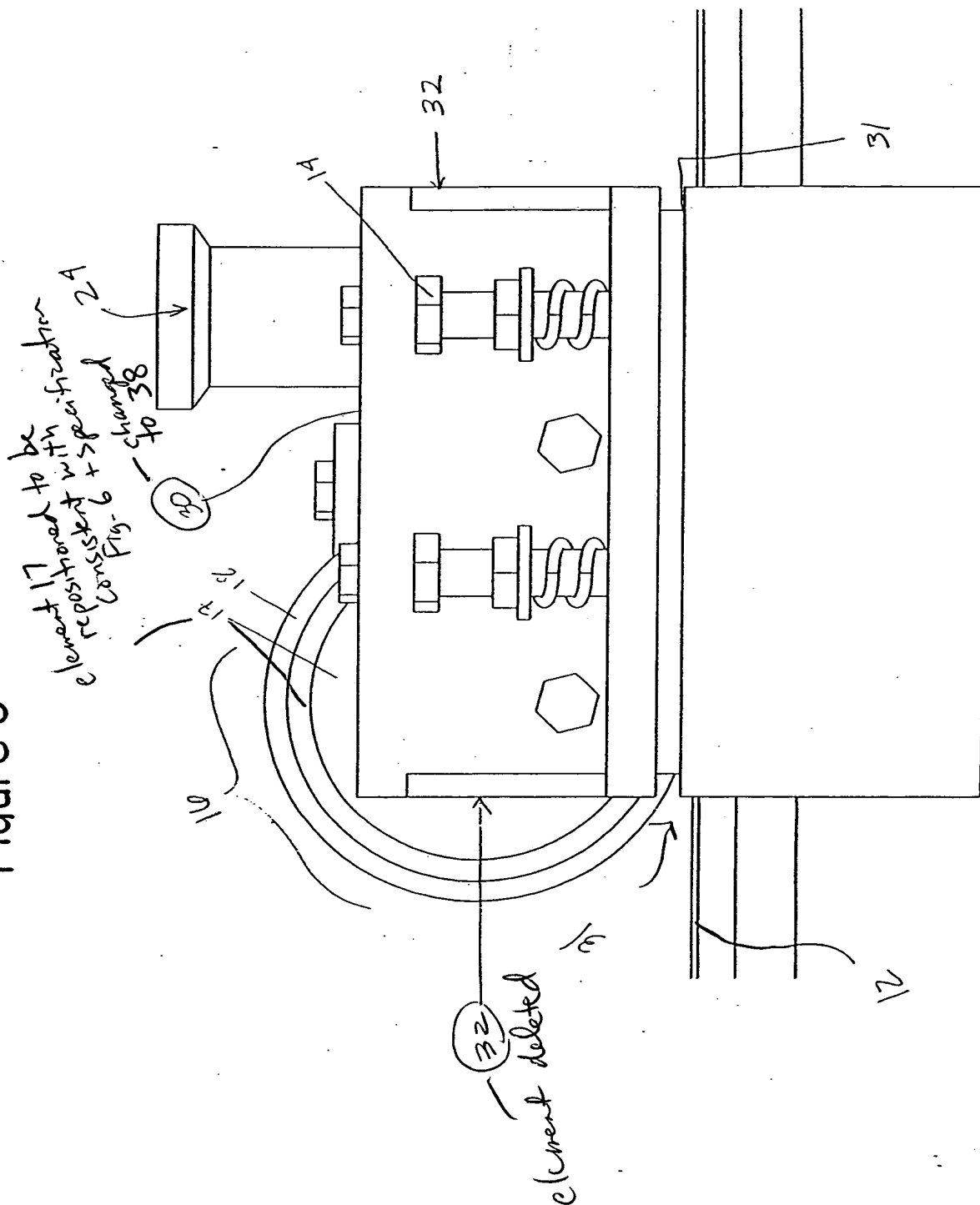
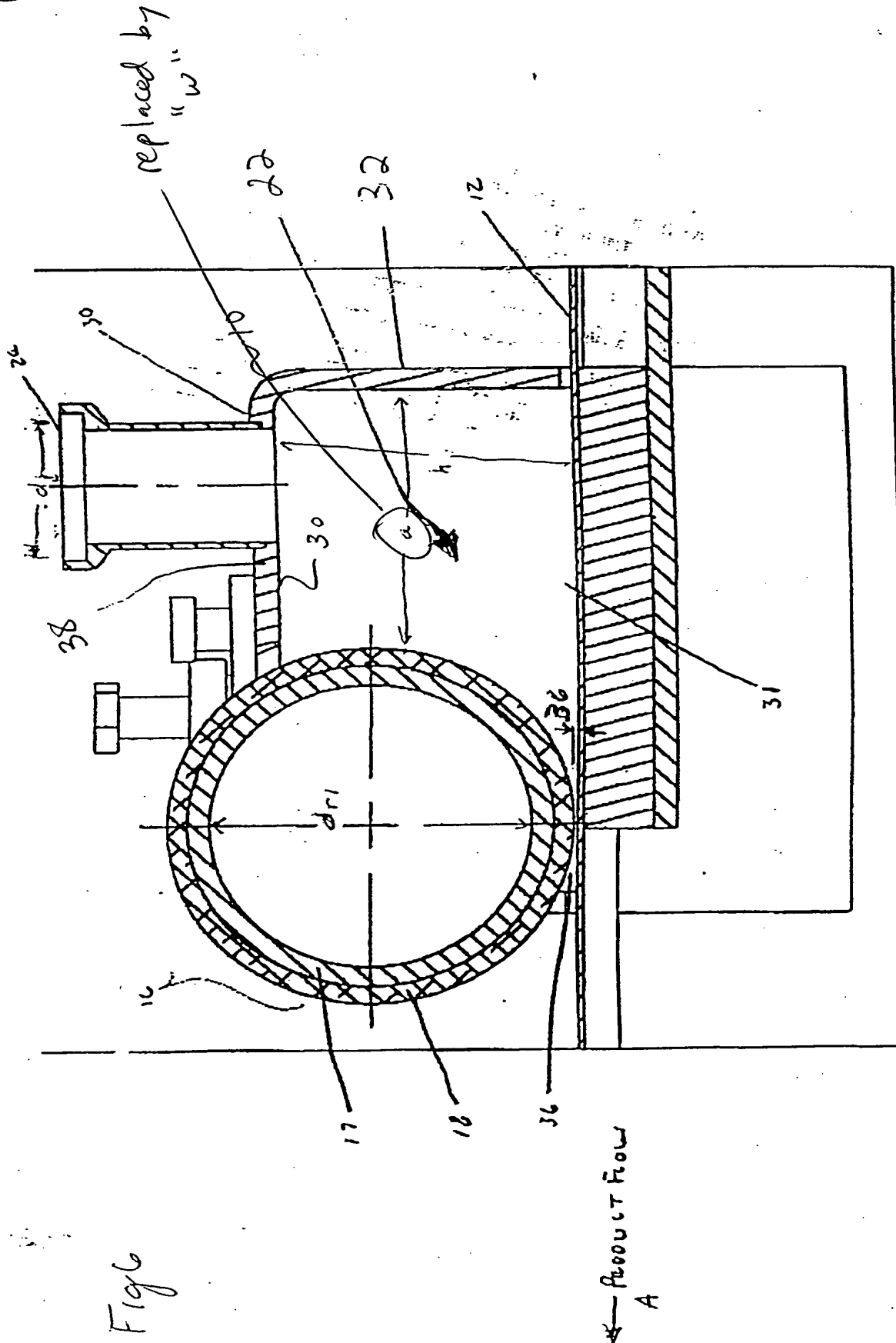




Figure 5





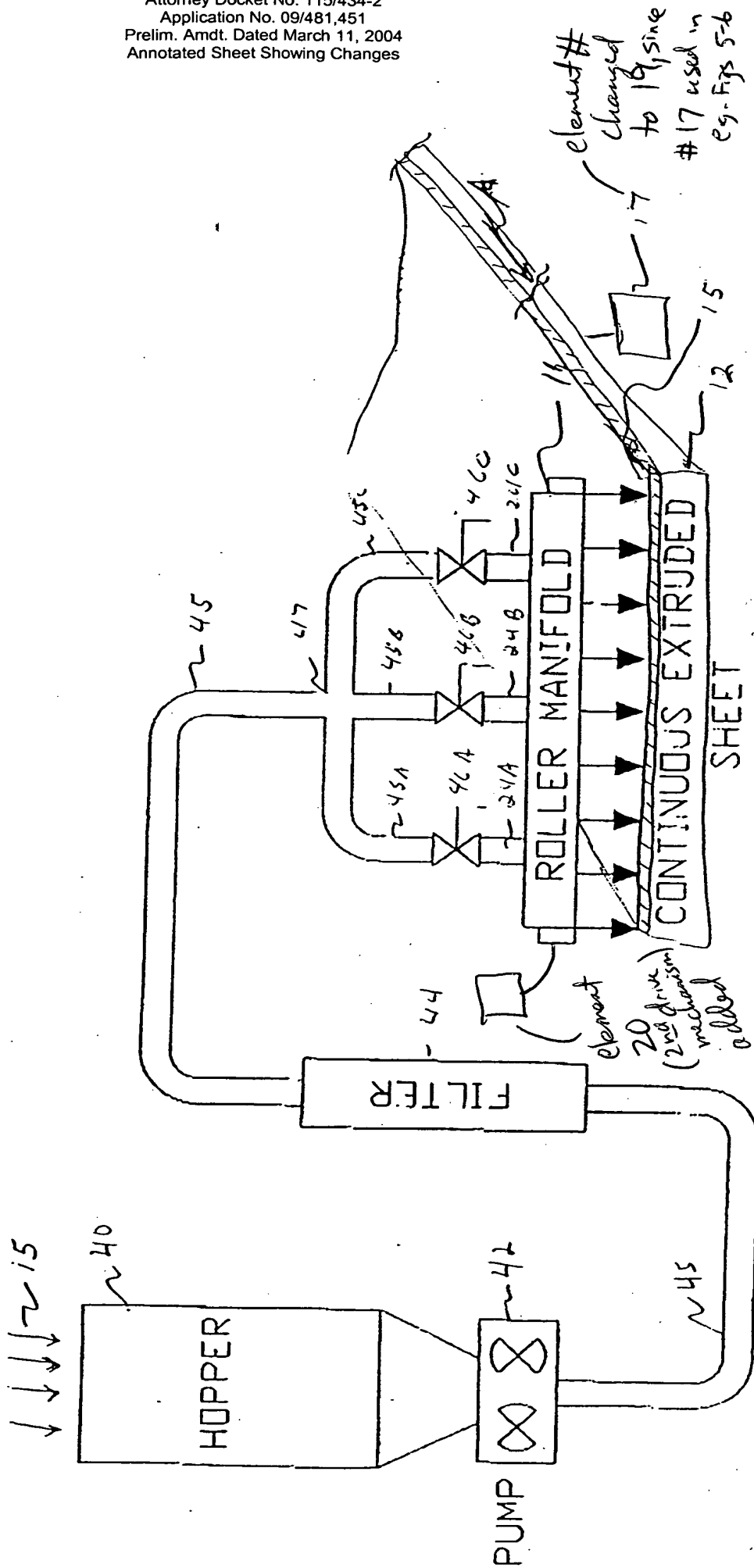


Fig. 7